

VETERANS AND HUMAN SERVICES LEVY

Fourth Quarter 2008 Report

Introduction

In November 2005, the citizens of King County voted to approve a Veterans and Human Services (VHS) Levy to respond to the needs of the county's veterans and their families, and other individuals and families in need.

The King County Executive, the Metropolitan King County Council, the volunteer members of two citizen oversight boards, veterans' organizations, housing and human services providers, and human services staff and advocates from across the county have been involved in the implementation of the VHS. King County Ordinance 15279 required the levy proceeds to be split equally into two funds, one for services for veterans, military personnel and their families, and one for services for other low income people in need of these services. These funds are called the **Veterans Levy Fund** and the **Human Services Levy Fund**.

The 2009 Adopted King County Budget (Ordinance 16312, Sections 69 and 70) approved by the King County Council in November 2008 called for quarterly reports on the progress of levy implementation. Proviso 1 of Section 69 pertaining to the Veterans Levy Fund states:

"Of this appropriation, \$100,000 shall not be expended or encumbered until the executive submits four quarterly progress reports for the veterans and human services. The quarterly reports shall include at a minimum: the amount of funding expended to date, the amount of funding contracted to date, the number and status of request for proposals to date and any individual program statistics available, such as number of individuals served. The quarterly reports are due on March 1, June 1, September 1 and December 1, 2009, for council review."

A similar proviso in Section 70 pertains to the Human Services Levy Fund, with identical requirements and timelines.

This Fourth Quarter 2008 Report on the implementation of the VHS Levy is submitted to the King County Council per the budget provisos. The report provides updates on the efforts and activities related to the levy, and includes an attachment showing the status of funds as of December 31, 2008, listed by levy activity as well as by specific fund (Veterans Levy Fund and Human Services Levy Fund) (see Attachment A). It also includes a January 14, 2009, news release announcing the results of the capital housing and support services Request for Proposals (RFPs) conducted during fall 2008 (see Attachment B).

Background

Both of the levy boards – the Regional Human Services Levy Oversight Board and the Veterans Citizen Levy Oversight Board – continued working throughout the fourth quarter to review procurement plans or program designs for remaining levy activities that had not yet undergone

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review, and to incorporate feedback from the public. The boards have now reviewed activity plans representing \$37 million (97.2 percent) of all available funds through the end of fourth quarter 2008.

After these plans progress through the board and public review step, we are then able to make the funds for these activities available in the community: four additional RFP processes were completed in the Fourth Quarter 2008, and as of December 31, 2008, a total of \$35.6 million (93 percent) of all available funds have been committed by Letter of Award, Contract and/or Memorandum of Agreement, or allocated to expand the capacity of the King County Veterans' Program (KCVF). Funds for the remaining activities reviewed by the boards are currently in the process of being made available.

As a reminder, there are two separate levy funds: 50 percent of the levy dollars are dedicated to veterans, military personnel, and their families, and 50 percent of the levy dollars are dedicated to others in need, with oversight provided by two separate boards, the Veterans Citizens Levy Oversight Board and the Human Services Levy Oversight Board, respectively. The King County Council adopted a Service Improvement Plan to guide the investments of both portions of the levy dollars. The plan identified three major goals: (1) to prevent or reduce homelessness, (2) to prevent or reduce unnecessary involvement in the criminal justice and emergency medical systems, and (3) to increase the self sufficiency of veterans, military personnel and their families and other individuals and families in need. This plan specified 31 particular activities to be funded, grouping these activities under the following five overarching strategies:

- Strategy One: Enhancing services and access for veterans (using Veterans Levy Funds only)
- Strategy Two: Ending homelessness through outreach, prevention, permanent supportive housing and employment
- Strategy Three: Increasing access to behavioral health services
- Strategy Four: Strengthening families at risk (using Human Services Levy Funds only)
- Strategy Five: Increasing effectiveness of resource management and evaluation

Attachment A of this report provides a chart showing how implementation of each of the 31 individual activities is progressing through a "pipeline" of steps, from the required board and public review (step 1), through the RFP process (step 2), and ultimately, to contracting and provision of services in the community (step 3), and lastly, to the county's expenditure of the funds (as agencies submit requests for reimbursement of the funds they have already expended). Please note that Attachment A has three pages: the first is an overall summary, while the second and third are specific to each of the two levy funds. The steps in this "pipeline" include:

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Step 1: Board review and public comment on the procurement plan and/or program design for each specific activity, as required by the council. The boards have reviewed activity plans representing \$37 million (97.2 percent) of all available funds.

Step 2: Request For Proposal processes occur if community agencies will be implementing the activity. If there is to be an RFP process for the activity area, Attachment A indicates whether it has been completed, is in process, or is scheduled for an upcoming date. In some cases, there is no RFP because the Service Improvement Plan designated a county department or program as responsible for implementing the activity, such as the KCVP, or the Nurse Family Partnership program with Public Health – Seattle and King County (PHSKC).

Step 3: Actual commitment of the funds to specific community agencies or county departments, once the RFP or other review process has been completed. This commitment may occur through letters of award, contracts, or memoranda of agreement. Once an agency has its contract, it can hire staff and begin providing services.

Step 4: Expenditure. The county pays on a reimbursement basis, so this step occurs only after the individual agencies have provided services and submitted reimbursement requests. As of December 31, 2008, a total of \$19.2 million (50.3 percent) of Veterans Levy and Human Services Levy program funds have been expended.

Attachment A provides detail on each of the 31 strategies according to the steps noted above. The first spreadsheet is a consolidated one, combining both the Veterans Services Levy Funds and the Health and Human Services Levy Funds. The next two spreadsheets show the commitments and expenditures broken out for each of the two funds.

Status of Implementation

This section highlights selected activities underway for each of the five overarching strategies.

Strategy One: Services for Veterans

Activities have been underway since Fourth Quarter 2006 to expand the geographic range and increase the capacity of the KCVP (Activities 1.1, 1.2). Services continue to be provided at the Seattle and Renton office sites and one day a week at the Auburn Veterans Facility in addition to outreach services to Enumclaw, Maple Valley, North Bend and Carnation. Outreach to the rural areas is expected to gradually increase the client visits to Renton, as well as Auburn while outreach to the urban eastside and north end are also in process. Ongoing subcontracts with the Washington Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA) continue to increase the services provided to veterans in King County.

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According to fourth quarter 2008 service data, the KCVP had about 2,300 client visits, similar to last quarter. Most visits were to the Seattle office that experienced 2,116 (93 percent) client visits followed by Renton with 161 visits (7 percent). Outreach to the rural areas is expected to gradually increase the client visits to Renton, as well as Auburn. A total of about 1,300 unduplicated clients received services from KCVP last quarter, about a third (443) receiving financial services to assist with such things as rent, utilities, and mortgage. Over 66 percent of financial services were related to housing assistance and about 5 percent related to food assistance.

The KCVP's most significant partner is the WDVA with staff co-located at the program's downtown office. The WDVA accepts referrals from KCVP providing a variety of services addressing the needs of veterans seeking services including:

1. Homeless Veterans Reintegration Project for clients who are employable or employed and in need of food, clothing and/or shelter. Veterans Levy funds helped place 43 veterans in permanent housing for the period July through December 2008.
2. Veterans Incarcerated Program for clients currently in or recently released from King County jails, for post release needs and planning. Veterans Levy funds helped find employment for 61 veterans that remained employed for over 90 days, or placed them in permanent housing.
3. Veterans Conservation Corps (VCC) for clients interested in volunteer or green collar career programs at local community colleges. Once a week, a representative of the VCC is at KCVP to accept referrals. Forty-eight clients were engaged Fourth Quarter 2008. Of these, 16 were placed in training and four were employed.
4. Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) providing treatment to veterans with PTSD and trauma counseling to spouses, and children who have grown up with a parent suffering from PTSD. During the period July through December 2008, 57 veterans received PTSD counseling funded by the Veterans Levy.

Another close partner of KCVP is the Veterans Affairs Medical Center (VAMC) that offers a variety of services to veteran clients such as those available at the Veteran's Administration (VA) Addictions Treatment Center. Collaboration with VAMC services is made easier by visits to KCVP by VAMC staff. For example, the VAMC Homeless Outreach Coordinator is available onsite every Thursday to consult with staff, accept referrals and schedule clients for medical, addiction and mental health appointments at the hospital. Once a week, the VA Supportive Housing case managers visit KCVP to increase veterans' access to Section 8 vouchers both in Seattle and King County housing units. In addition, a Veterans Benefit Specialist is available at KCVP on a weekly basis.

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The KCVP also collaborates with two agencies providing transitional and shelter beds for veterans. William Booth Center provides 55 shelter beds and the Compass Center Men's Program provides 8 transitional beds. The Compass Center's Shoreline Veterans Center and the Vietnam Veterans Leadership Program Houses in Burien and Columbia City continue to be transitional living resources for KCVP clients. Solid Ground's Housing Stability Project assists KCVP clients by providing rental and housing support and manages the Community Voice Mail for those in need of a contact phone number for housing, employment or health care needs. The KCVP working agreement with YWCA and the King County Housing Authority continues to provide three Section 8 housing vouchers per month to qualifying disabled veterans via the Housing Access and Services Program. The KCVP also collaborates in case planning with the Plymouth Housing Group – Simons Apartments for the veteran clients housed in their facility.

Strategy Two: Ending Homelessness

The Service Improvement Plan specified eight activities related to ending homelessness through outreach, prevention, permanent supportive housing and employment. The boards have completed their review of all procurement plans for the activities under this strategy, so this step has been completed. The RFPs are nearly completed as well. Four additional RFP processes were completed in the Fourth Quarter 2008, bringing the total number of RFPs conducted to date under this strategy to sixteen. This includes two annual RFPs, one for capital housing and the other for supportive housing services supports in addition to the RFP for the Forensic Intensive Supportive Housing project (part of Activity 2.5) and an RFP to select additional agencies to link education and employment to supportive housing (Activity 2.8).

The 2008 Fall Funding Round for capital projects awarded \$3,024,929 of Human Services Levy and \$600,000 of Veterans Levy funds (Activity 2.2). Eight projects received levy funding including the following:

Housing Resources Group Kenmore Village Apartments: Awarded \$1.7 million to construct 100 apartment units. Of the total award, \$350,000 of Human Services Levy Funds will help provide 17 units of permanent housing for households transitioning from homelessness in Kenmore.

YWCA Family Village at Issaquah Highlands: Awarded \$1.5 million to construct 97 apartment units, including 20 units of permanent housing for people with disabilities. Of the total award, \$314,607 of Human Services Levy Funds will help provide up to 10 permanent units for homeless households in Issaquah.

Foundation for the Challenged IV: Awarded \$500,000 of Human Services Levy Funds to acquire two single-family homes, approximately six living units of permanent affordable housing for adult individuals with developmental disabilities.

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Vashon HouseHold – Davis Freeman Apartments: Awarded \$2,213,008 to acquire and rehabilitate a 20-unit apartment building on Vashon Island for low-income households. Of the total award, \$250,008 of Human Services Levy Funds will help provide 10 units targeted to very low-income households that are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

Plymouth First and Cedar Apartments: Awarded \$4,340,606 including \$1,000,000 of Human Services Levy Funds to help construct 81 units of permanent supportive housing for homeless individuals in Seattle.

Downtown Emergency Service Center Cascade Supportive Housing: Awarded \$4,890,000 to construct 83 units of permanent supportive housing in Seattle for 83 chronically homeless adults. Of the total award, \$350,000 of Veterans Levy Funds will help provide permanent housing for at least 27 homeless veterans.

Sound Mental Health Holly Creek Apartments: Awarded \$1,412,044 including \$610,314 of Human Services Levy Funds to purchase and rehabilitate the Holly Creek Apartments in Des Moines to help provide 18 units of permanent affordable housing for people with severe and persistent mental illness.

The Compass Center Renton Veterans Center: Additional award of \$250,000 of Veterans Levy Funds to complete funding for the construction of 58 units of permanent affordable housing including 14 units prioritized for homeless veterans.

The funding awards for the Housing Support Services (part of Activity 2.4) have also been announced. This RFP awarded \$700,000 in Human Services Levy Funds and \$300,000 in Veterans Levy Funds. Successful applicants included the following:

Eastside Interfaith Social Concerns, Congregations for the Homeless Permanent Supportive Housing – Create 15 new units of permanent supportive housing in the private rental market for chronically homeless adults in East King County. Award: \$282,340 in Human Services Levy Funds was awarded for five years for rental assistance and case management services (\$56,468 annually).

Low Income Housing Institute, McDermott Place – Provide supportive services and operating support for 75 units of permanent supportive housing in Seattle for chronically homeless individuals including veterans. Award: \$300,000 of Veterans Levy Funds and \$417,660 of Human Services Levy funds were awarded for five years for case management, employment services and operating support (\$60,000 in Veterans Levy Funds and \$83,532 in Human Services Funds annually).

Awards for both these RFPs were formally announced in a January 14, 2009 King County news release, which is included in this report as Attachment B.

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Public Health – Seattle and King County (PHSKC) is managing the clinical services team component for the Activity 2.4, providing supportive services for housing in Seattle and South King County. In Seattle, the Housing Health Outreach Team provided health services to 374 formerly homeless individuals in selected permanent supportive housing sites during fourth quarter 2008. The team is comprised of chemical dependency providers subcontracted through Evergreen Treatment Services, and nursing and mental health providers subcontracted through Neighborcare Health (formerly Puget Sound Neighborhood Health Centers). Nursing services were provided to 348 unduplicated people during the Fourth Quarter 2008. In South King County, the Levy-funded registered nurse from HealthPoint (formerly Community Health Centers of King County) provided 84 health visits in fourth quarter 2008 to 18 formerly homeless individuals living in Housing First sites prior to leaving the position. The position was advertised early in December, with the expectation of hiring a new nurse in January 2009.

The third RFP that was completed fourth quarter 2008 was for the Forensic Intensive Supportive Housing project (part of Activity 2.5), a project to secure permanent supportive housing for adults with histories of long-term homelessness and involvement with the King County Criminal Justice System. The target population is homeless veterans and non-veterans with mental illness who are enrolled in mental health court in King County and subsequently found incompetent due to severe psychiatric impairment. Sound Mental Health was selected to implement this project.

The expanded Housing Stability Program (Activity 2.7) has been in operation for 8 months and during that time has served a total of 1,731 low-income individuals in 574 households who were at risk of losing their housing. These include 290 veterans in 123 households and 1,436 other low-income individuals in 451 households.

During fourth quarter 2008 a RFP process was conducted to link education and employment to supportive housing (Activity 2.8), the second RFP conducted under this activity. Two agencies were selected through this RFP process which disbursed remaining Veterans Levy Funds. Awards went to TRAC Associates in partnership with The Compass Center, and the WDVA. Contracts with these agencies will be finalized First Quarter 2009. All funds under this activity have now been committed.

Finally, in the Fourth Quarter 2008 progress continued in implementing Activity 2.1 providing outreach and engagement services to chronically homeless individuals in South King County. Two projects were funded under this activity, the Mobile Medical Unit and an expansion of the Projects for Assistance in Transition from Homelessness (PATH) outreach team. The client population to be served characteristically have mental health and substance abuse conditions (including PTSD), and many are veterans of the U.S. military.

The new Mobile Medical Unit project held four clinics for homeless individuals in South King County in Federal Way, Kent, Auburn and Tukwila during fourth quarter 2008. Each clinic was coordinated with a free meal offered at a church and attended by chronically homeless people. Pastors helped with publicity and logistics such as arranging for private space inside the church for the project's intake and case management staff to meet with patients.

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Over 25 homeless individuals were provided a medical visit at the four clinics and all but two patients were referred to case management staff for assistance with other needed services.

The Mobile Medical Unit coordinated its activities with two newly hired, levy-funded Sound Mental Health outreach workers who are part of their Project for Assistance in Transition from Homelessness (PATH) team. These new outreach workers received training during Fourth Quarter 2008 and provided outreach, mental health, substance abuse, case management and other support services to individuals who are homeless and have serious mental illnesses. They made contact with a total of 114 individuals during the quarter.

Strategy Three: Behavioral Health Services

The plans for all four of the specified activities related to increasing access to behavioral health services have been through the board and public review step. Two of the activities are underway and the other two will be underway in 2009.

Public Health-Seattle and King County is managing projects expanding and integrating behavioral health services into safety net primary health clinics (Activity 3.1). They conducted two RFP processes to disburse levy funds under this activity in 2008. The first conducted in first quarter 2008 disbursed Human Service Levy Funds and Veterans Levy Funds and an RFP conducted in third quarter 2008 disbursed Veterans Levy funds only.

The King County Behavioral Health Safety Net Consortium, coordinated and administered by Community Health Plan of Washington, was awarded Human Services Levy funds in the first RFP process. The consortium is using funds from the Human Services Levy to enhance integrated mental health services in over twenty safety net medical clinics for clients who are uninsured and for clients eligible for state-funded General Assistance Unemployable (GA-U) services. Over 2,000 clients eligible for GA-U coverage were screened and enrolled in the program by the end of November.

Strategy 3.1 provides Human Services Levy funds to the consortium to support these services at the following agencies:

- HealthPoint
- Country Doctor Community Health Centers
- International Community Health Services
- Harborview Medical Center
- Public Health – Seattle and King County
- Neighborcare Health
- SeaMar Community Health Centers
- Seattle Indian Health Board

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In addition, PHSKC worked with the consortium to plan and develop pilot programs specific to unique populations of uninsured patients:

- *Harborview Medical Center International Medicine Clinic* which served 800 uninsured adult immigrant and refugee patients in 2007, the majority being Hispanic or Somali.
- *Public Health Seattle-King County Eastgate Public Health Center* which served 5,000 primary care patients in 2007 of which about 47 percent were uninsured.

Through the first RFP, Veterans Levy Funds were awarded to HealthPoint SeaTac and HealthPoint Renton (formerly Community Health Centers of King County) for services at two of HealthPoint's south King County locations. In the second Veterans Levy RFP, conducted in September 2008, Veterans Levy Funds were awarded to HealthPoint Kent and to the Seattle Indian Health Board. Much fourth quarter 2008 activity centered on hiring and ramp-up of services at these two clinics.

International Community Health Services received a limited grant award through the RFP process to conduct an assessment of outreach strategies and services needed for Asian and Pacific Islander veterans and their families. The agency has selected a subcontractor to assist in this assessment and a final report is anticipated by June 2009.

HealthPoint partners with Valley Cities Counseling and Consultation, in developing outreach and program expertise specific to military personnel and their families. The Valley Cities Outreach and War Trauma Treatment Program, funded through a South King County partnership with HealthPoint, continues to provide screening for trauma and outreach services at 14 locations, including community colleges, veterans centers, Veterans of Foreign Wars posts, food banks, human services organizations such as the Federal Way Multi-service Center, and through the King County Veterans Coalition and the Seattle and American Lake locations of the VA Puget Sound Healthcare System.

In November, all the clinics implemented a web-based registry, the University of Washington Mental Health Integrated Tracking System (MHITS), to track individuals and families served through this activity. The MHITS is a key tool to evaluating the mental health outcomes of this program.

In early November, PHSKC and the Community Health Plan of Washington co-sponsored a two-day training for all social workers and other community health staff involved in this pilot project and in other behavioral health programs funded through the Veterans and Human Services Levy. Training for this pilot was provided primarily by faculty from the University of Washington, Department of Psychiatry and Children's Hospital.

Activities 3.2 and 3.3 both deal with PTSD and trauma-sensitive services. One activity focuses on developing a curriculum and providing training in trauma sensitive services to general social service providers and the other, on developing a curriculum and training behavioral health

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professionals in evidence-based practices for PTSD treatment. Due to the high level of expertise the WDVA has in providing PTSD services, the Department of Community and Human Services (DCHS) has determined these levy-funded activities may be best managed by that agency. The procurement plan for these activities will be revised to reflect this change and the WDVA will receive funds to lead the RFP process to select trainers to develop the curricula and provide the training.

The Program to Enhance Active, Rewarding Lives for Seniors (PEARLS) (Activity 3.4) provides in-home treatment for depression for older veterans and non-veterans. They report enrolling 55 participants during the period July through December 2008. Of these, 30 completed their final counseling session and all but four scored higher on the assessment tool used to measure depression in this counseling intervention. The four elderly clients all were experiencing major health problems such as severe PTSD, back pain and other chronic conditions. While they did not improve on their assessment score, their overall outlook on life did improve which ultimately proved beneficial. For example, one who was very mistrusting of the medical profession had stopped taking her medications. Through the PEARLS intervention this participant was able to find a doctor, make a visit and resume taking medications.

Strategy Four: Strengthening Families

Plans for each of the six activities specified in the Service Improvement Plan related to strengthening families have now been through the board and public review step, and funding has been awarded for all six activities. In the third quarter 2008 report, information was provided on the Nurse Family Partnership (Activity 4.1) and Services for maternal depression in primary care clinics and maternity support programs (Activity 4.2). In this fourth quarter 2008 report an update is provided on services to parents exiting the criminal justice system and the King County Family Treatment Court.

The Department of Community and Human Services is managing the program for combined Activities 2.6, 4.4 and 4.5 to provide housing, enhanced support services and education and employment services to single parents exiting the criminal justice system. Together, these three activities form a comprehensive program model serving single parents from the time they are incarcerated, through the time they are reunited with their children and stable, in permanent housing. It includes transitional housing and employment service support. Two agencies were selected in the first of two RFP processes.

A contract with YWCA began on September 1, 2008, and the final quarter of the year was dedicated to start-up activities, including:

- Hiring two staff
- Developing agreements/sub-contracts for services including client and child assessments, reunification services, and life skill classes
- Renewing contracts with King County correction facilities and meeting with local work release program

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A contract with First Place began on October 1, 2008, and served two families with a total of four children in transitional housing during this period.

- All six individuals served are African American
- Two of the children served are five years old and under; two are between 6 and 10 years of age

The second RFP will be released this spring along with two other funding sources providing operating funds and rental assistance for homeless households. Levy funds will be limited to the target population identified in this strategy – single parents exiting the criminal justice system living in or exiting from transitional housing. Finally, the King County Jobs Initiative Program and its contracting partners will also use a portion of the funds to provide employment training to this population.

In 2006, the Human Services Levy provided \$200,000 in one-time-only funding to the King County Superior Court, Family Treatment Court (Activity 4.6). The Family Treatment Court program promotes the welfare of children in the dependency system, by intervening to address drug, alcohol and other service needs of families through a judicially managed collaboration to facilitate family reunification or an alternative permanency plan. Due to the 2009 budget crisis experienced by King County, the County Council directed the Veterans and Human Services Levy to fund this program again. A total of \$225,000 will be provided annually through 2011 for the Family Treatment Court. A memorandum of agreement is being finalized between the Department of Community and Human Services and the King County Superior Court for Family Treatment Court program services.

Strategy Five: Resource Management and Evaluation

The smallest of the five overarching strategies defined in the Service Improvement Plan, the primary focus of Strategy Five is internal: evaluating levy program performance, increasing the quality and coordinated use of information systems to improve services, and coordinating regional planning efforts. The following is an update on the status of levy evaluation activities (Activity 5.1).

Progress continues in the overall evaluation of levy activities. In the fourth quarter 2008, the Levy Evaluation Manager began convening monthly coordination meetings with the managers of all data systems involved in the levy. This group includes representatives from the High Utilizer Data Base, Safe Harbors Homeless Management Information System, PHSKC, and the University of Washington. These meetings will help ensure coordination and collaboration among those who manage regional information systems tracking clients and services across a variety of levy activities. In addition, monthly meetings were held with King County staff conducting either research or evaluations on existing programs that have been expanded through levy funding.

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Several initial data and evaluation reports are to be prepared during 2009 covering the levy strategy areas. The first report will provide a regional look at the status of veterans and their families in King County. It will review data gathered from a broad range of sources such as Veterans Administration benefits, VA Hospital, American Communities Survey (provided by Puget Sound Regional Council) and the United States Department of Defense. The early data are demonstrating the broad diversity in age, location, ethnicity, and vulnerability in King County veteran populations. The analysis is expected to identify significant health and mental health issues experienced by King County's younger veteran populations, their families and their children.